

ALO-MINGALABA-KHA-MYA.

This is my second time in Myanmar and I am grateful to be back. In fact, it is an honor to be back in Myanmar and to participate in today's dialogue. On behalf of the U.S. military, please let me also express my gratitude that representatives from your military are here to participate in what we view as an important discussion. It is a discussion that we started two years ago at the first Human Rights Dialogue and continued during my visit last June.

I am here today because I firmly believe that the issue of human rights is of paramount importance to all professional militaries. I am also here today because I am committed to building a deeper and positive relationship with your military based on mutual respect for human rights. I want you to continue to see my face and know that I am a friend of Myanmar, but as a true friend I will speak honestly. My hope is that we have a robust discussion here today that advances both of our militaries' appreciation for human rights, democracy, civilian oversight, and diversity.

Like many of you I am a warrior a soldier and have lived a warrior's life. I have served in the United States Army for 33 years. During that time, I have had a wide variety of job and experiences. I have served at times of war and peace. I have jumped out of airplanes and piloted AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. I started out as a platoon leader and have risen in the ranks to the post that I hold now, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, which oversees U.S. military activities throughout the Asia-Pacific.

I have also served around the world and interacted with a variety of foreign militaries. Through those interactions I have grown to appreciate the numerous similarities we share, regardless of the nation we serve, and what makes a military truly professional. In my opinion, a truly professional military is one that fully adheres to all domestic and international laws, maintains and fosters the trust of the population it serves by treating every person with dignity and respect, and submits to the will of the people and democratic process.

Allow me to share how the U.S. Armed Forces instill this professionalism in our own ranks, and the important role that training and accountability play in this effort.

I will say up front – we are not perfect. You have seen or heard of events in Iraq and Afghanistan that were counter to our American ideals and values.

I am honest in admitting we made mistakes, some of our service members did not uphold the high ideals of our nation and for that we have suffered. We are an organization made of individuals who sometimes make wrong choices. But let me also say that I am tremendously proud of our military's values and how we work very hard each and every day to meet the highest standards that our citizens expect of us and that bring honor to our institution.

The United States Army, my branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, grew out of our revolutionary struggle against colonial rule in the 18th century. Therefore, our Army and our nation were tied together at birth. We cannot discuss our emphasis on core values related to human rights and individual freedoms without first discussing America's deepest values related to our oldest democratic traditions.

Speaking to you today, Soldier to Soldier, I can say truthfully that I would not want it any other way. I personally would not want to serve in an army that did not answer to the elected civilian leadership that swears to respect and uphold the same set of laws that I vowed to uphold. I feel this way because I have never forgotten what I learned in my early training. Simply put, militaries possess capabilities that are too powerful to be placed at the discretion of just a few people; rather, they must be at the service of all of the People, and military power must only be utilized in accordance with the democratic will of the people. The bottom line is that, as a Soldier and as a Citizen, I place my trust in the democratic social compact that has been underwritten by our nation's laws – and *not* in any set of individuals left unchecked by civilian-led institutional safeguards and whose agenda could potentially run counter to the will of the American people. Democracy is difficult, it is neither clean nor easy, but as a friend of Myanmar I ask that you stay on the course to true democracy. You, your military, but most importantly your people will be better for it...the world is watching, hoping that you will succeed.

When I look at our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, I see more than the uniform they wear and the equipment they carry. I believe they were born from America's deepest convictions about individual rights and about the relationship between the military and the citizens we swear to serve and, most importantly, to protect.

Having served in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I have come to the strong conclusion that a Soldier's most essential equipment is not a weapon, but rather the set of values that he or she brings to the mission, and that which we foster within them through continued education and training. I believe it is these core values that distinguish any Soldier in any Army as the mark of a true Professional, a Warrior for their nation, and a champion of freedom, peace and national security.

Chief among these values is the respect for human rights and ethical conduct. Human rights are those universal moral principles that set out standards of human behavior are protected as legal rights in international law. They are fundamental rights to which all human beings are entitled. They do not change based on one's race, gender, beliefs, or position in society. Those rights include life; liberty; education; security of person; freedom from torture, cruel treatment, and persecution; and freedom of thought, conscience, expression, and peaceful assembly.

Professional education and training are absolutely essential to instilling these values and molding who we in the U.S. military are today. It has had a major impact on my development as a leader. The U.S. Department of Defense dedicates tremendous resources to the professional development of our personnel. We recognize that our Army works in what we call the "human domain". Beyond physical land, sea or air domains, armies primarily deal with people, cultures and human nature. This is the "human domain," and it is fundamental to how we engage as militaries. To us this means, as a large organization composed of many individuals, we can only be as good as our most honorable Soldier.

Therefore, the first task of any U.S. military leader is to establish clear principles of conduct, to lead by example, and then to ensure that those principles are well understood and permeate the entire organization through intensive leadership, education, training and oversight. This training in values, ethics and the laws of war including the protection of civilians is absolutely every bit as important for the U.S. Army as time spent training in the field or at the range.

But education and training are only the first step in the U.S. Army. The second task of leadership is to hold our Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers accountable for what they have learned - accountable for their actions.

Unfortunately, even given all our efforts to institute morals of warfare, all armies, including the U.S. Army, remain susceptible to:

- the actions of individuals abusing their authority
- straying from the laws of warfare and humanity
- straying from their training
- and straying from their individual values and ethics.

Without real accountability to deal with these cases quickly and transparently, discipline breaks down, command and control breaks down, and the mission fails. In my experience, I have found that a lack of accountability for unjust and unethical acts only leads to further indiscipline, unethical behavior, disrespect for authority, and a moral breakdown of the Command – leaving Soldiers on the battlefield to question “who is in charge”. While spontaneous and reactionary actions may appear to achieve limited tactical advantage, in reality, desperate actions inevitably drive the roots of the conflict even deeper.

So how do we handle violations?

As our policy states, if a U.S. Army Soldier or unit is suspected of straying from our values, and of violating our use of force protocols and the Rules of Engagement, or of endangering the security of civilian non-combatants and innocents, we consider it essential to move swiftly and impartially investigate the facts through established and independent military judicial systems, and take appropriate action as required. Violators of military and humane standards are held accountable. Without discipline and imposed standards, the U.S. Army cannot truly uphold the core values of our nation and the rule of law.

This philosophy can be condensed into two mantras:

- 1. Treat all people, without exception, with dignity and respect and,**
- 2. Issue orders that are only legal, ethical, and moral.**

These are some of my reflections based on my experience as an officer in America’s Armed Forces. My experiences may very well be different from yours. I also do not pretend that we have all the answers.

However, I do believe the basic ideas I have mentioned are relevant everywhere. I am confident that adherence to these principles will be essential to ending the longstanding conflict in your own country—in Kachin State, Shan State, and elsewhere—and to enabling reconciliation benefitting all of Myanmar’s people. In

my experience working with other militaries, I have found that when a nation's armed forces are above politics, respect the ultimate authority of elected civilians, abide by the rule of law and protect civilians, they will win the trust of the people they serve. It may seem they are accepting significant restrictions on their authority, but in fact they end up stronger, more respected, and more effective when they are called to fight.

In closing I am reminded of words from **your great General Aung San** on the difficult road you face. He said, "So then we must labour together in the common cause which concerns all and affects everybody. This is the best way in which we can show our highest sense of homage to our heroes; this is the only way in which we can accomplish the mission before us and find our salvation."

From my heart I want you to know I love your country and I believe in you. I hope you will consider my colleagues and myself a true friend of Myanmar and speak to me...honestly and with your heart. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on this subject. I welcome any questions you might have and am eager to hear more about the steps your military is taking to adhere to these international standards of professionalism.